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English Words: an Elementary Study of Derivations. By CHARLES F. JOHNSON, Professor of English Literature, Trinity College, Hartford. New York: Harper & Brothers.

The book before us is written in a very pleasant manner, and it contains some good and true statements. We should be glad to commend it more heartily if it were possible to do so, but the writer is evidently not a scholar in the subject he has undertaken to treat, and he has been very unfortunate in his selection of the books from which he has taken most of his material second-hand. It is true that Professor Johnson's aim has been to make a book for high-schools and colleges, and that "Its object is literary, not philological." But this will scarcely excuse the author for his careless sifting of material and his frequent mingling of the false with the true. As evidence of the author's unfitness for his self-imposed task, he has these sentences after an incorrect and misleading classification of the Indo-European languages: "Classifications slightly differing from the above have been suggested. One of the latest is found in Brugmann's *Comparative Grammar*." It would hardly be inferred from this that reference is made to one of the greatest authorities of modern times, whom at least it would have been safe to follow. As another evidence of unfitness it may be pointed out, that Professor Johnson takes his statement of "Grimm's Law" from Earle's *Philology of the English Tongue* with this remarkable foot note: "Skeat formulates the law of phonetic change more concisely and comprehensively. I give Earle's statement because it is more graphic, and seems to me more likely to impress the young reader with the breadth of the relation." Any one who could select Earle's statement of the so-called Grimm's Law can scarcely have the most elementary ideas of this fundamental principle in Teutonic philology.

The great trouble with Professor Johnson's book is that he has little conception of a true language philosophy, of language as a development, and he is therefore led into many errors as to how our speech has been formed, how it has received additions from foreign sources, and what is the exact relationship of the native and foreign elements. His book is full of misstatements that are interesting at the expense of exactness, or misleading from their superficiality. His conception of the Norman period and its influence on the English language has been gained largely from the interesting but misleading chapter in Scott's *Ivanhoe*. His statements in regard to the "Latin element" show the most superficial ideas of language, although it must be said in these cases that Professor Johnson has only copied the opinions of others. A striking example of the author's misstatements regards the use of Norman and English synonyms (page 76-7), a statement originally made by Professor Earle, but extremely inaccurate, as the slightest investigation will show.

The book before us has a number of chapters on derivation of

words. They are full, either of ludicrous mistakes made by ignorant etymologists in the past, or of odd and curious etymologies. These are no doubt entertaining, but they are not particularly instructive. If chapters are to be written on English etymology to-day, they should emphasize first of all the regularity of sound changes, especially in the Teutonic element, so that etymologizing may be seen to be no longer a matter of hap-hazard guessing, but rather tracing the effects of fixed and determinate laws. The general impression left by these chapters in the book before us is therefore wrong, although many of the etymologies are correct.

Oliver Farrar Emerson.

English Classics for Schools. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago : American Book Company.

The series before us is intended to include those books prescribed by the New York and New England colleges to be read by candidates for examination in English composition. We have received Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Selections from the *Sketch-book*, the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, Macaulay's second *Essay on Chatham*, Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* and *Twelfth Night*. Each of these is prepared with an introduction, generally biographical, and explanatory notes at the foot of the page. For the *Ivanhoe* also there is a special glossary of difficult or peculiar words. The whole makes a convenient volume for the student preparing for college, while the series may also be used to advantage in all secondary schools. Indeed if such a series of books were formally adopted for use in all high-schools and academies, and were consistently and carefully used by skilled teachers, there would be more hope for the English of the ordinary undergraduate.

O. F. E.